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Bard

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Too many seeds.
Sympathize. The wrong
beginning knocks
once and goes away.

Or was it right,
the right one, and all
the rest are shades
she left behind?

Because any beginning
lasts a long time,
almost to the end
reaching if there is an end.

Are you? The whole
story, the word
exchanged, the faraway?

Linger blue. I knew
it was not your color,
not the right one.

Nobody had died yet

and grief is always
something chosen.

Something wrong
with all remembering—
quick, what
is the capital of despair?

Who was the first
resident? Little
by little strangers
appear, all
dressed in words
you never use

you're a bird
in the birdbath,
but if we slowed
down the tape till
that burst of bird
chatter on it spoke
at human speed
what language would we hear,
the consonantless
continuity of angels?
Fallen or otherwise?

You know all this
because you grieve,
grieve with your hips,
and that is terrible,
that the body grieves,
flesh trembles in its depths,
the muscles of water tremble,
the tears of your skin,
you grieve with your hands.

But remember
that instruction
in the Gita, *ma*
such, no grief,
no grieving.
But that also is remembering,

the stream where grief flows
through the country
where there is no morning.

No dark. The sun
is always up, always
leaving, the air hot,
overused, stale
from too much talking.
In my breath

I feel you grieving.

1 September 2012

= = = = =

Over our heads
people are always coming forward
trying to reach this time.

Rasputin peers up through the ice,
sees the Holy Savior the Redeemer
gazing down from heaven.

At him. God, he thinks,
Christ is so impassive,
he weeps for all of us,
why doesn't he ever smile?
He floated further, towards
the neverending sea, the sea
is all mouth, a man,
he thinks, is all going, going
fierce with life, no less
fierce with dying. I am dying.

And Christ said: But not dead yet.
It is a long road from breath
to no more breathing,
further than Petersburg to Omsk, further
than the whole world, think about that
while you're so busy trying to die.
Oh Lord forgive me, he may have thought.

And his Savior said There is nothing to forgive.

Night follows day without permission.

You are winter now—don't be too afraid.

1 September 2012, Great Barrington

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Loose bodies
of those who have been
mothers. Martyrs
to the sense of the old,
oldest machine.

1.ix.12 Great Barrington

= = = = =

They possess their space
by sound.

They call it music
for want of a word.

1.ix.12

= = = = =

Cast adrift on a bad idea
he floated to these shores—
dispersing pathogens everywhere.
He is the Puritan. Millions died.
They still do from his angry mind.

That is my grief this morning, America has an angry mind. No wonder so much goes wrong, and even the loveliest inventions turn into commerce at best, then bondage of pleasures and habits and ideas, then war. Pacifists are angry at the Pentagon, vegans cherish all living beings except non-vegan relatives. The churches are angry at women, women angry at women— how dare another woman not be as wretched as I. All these grievances are valid, but their anger is not. Justice is not served by anger. Imagine solving disputes by compassion. Imagine empathy.

2 September 2012

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I must have been angry to say all that —
ask a sinner about sin.

Cross all that out and start again.

Daylight is a shower of photons —
the *sun raining* of Provençal —
my eyes wet with it already,
the streetlamps have just gone out.

No. Start again.

Dissolve the statement
into its component parts —
the words are not the problem,
words never say anything.

Words are stars in the blackest sky —
our feeble eyes try to link them,
draw sacred silly pictures of
how we think they fit together,
Camelopardus, Orion, Andromeda.

But none of our grammar spoils the stars.

Leave the words in morning peace
unsyntaxed by the angry day.

That was Pound's saving genius — past all
his opinions (toxic or benign) the sudden
apparition of his ideograph, a decent

bunch of images arrayed to tell in Thinglish

what no man could say.

Or something like that.

An essay that goes nowhere,

an essay that floats in the bathtub beside you,

between your knees, teased by your toes—

a rubber alphabet that floats

exclusively in the water you displaced —

a rubber duckie poetics, a sky full of rain.

2 September 2012

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But never look it over
until the world is done —
what Ararat is some
unknown Ark still resting on
waiting for its sleek sides
to pop open and a herd come out
to interlect us again and mind our ways
deus ex machina —
we build so many machines
in the childlike faith that
from one of them some
day some god will come.

2 September 2012

SUMMER

Blue is over
green is under

green is always reaching up
blue is always reaching down

green is the energy of earth
reaching up to the sky

green is earth
dreaming of heaven
even deep in summer.

In winter it makes,
spends all its energies
“inward upon” —

no green to spare.

2 September 2012

= = = = =

And any day will be the end.

Wear clean underwear to meet your maker
and after ninety years or so
the soliloquy finally comes to an end

but are they still listening, out there
beyond the footlights that made
our faces so glamorous or grotesque
to please them in that magic land of *there*?

Things come out right, you always knew,
things come out the way they should because they do.

3 September 2012

= = = = =

It is hard to live in an ironic age
and not be a little rusty from it,
it weakens the fierce sarcasm
more natural to intelligence.

3.ix.12

= = = = =

Mediated desire is the saddest loss,
and mediating desires one of the vilest crimes.
Everything I want is wrong
until I find
who does the wanting and why.

3.ix.12

= = = = =

But still over the treetops some arrival —
 live for the climax,
 praise honest work if you can find it,
 alternate poetry and calculus,
 remember your parents and stay out late
 the circus is always in the next town
 the hand you write with is the hand I mean
 “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”
 sunbeams slicing through the leaves
 waitresses milling about in the empty restaurant
 what’s good to eat?
 What will make the honest body praise?
 What sings in your song?

Slagheap alongside the mine
 pool in the lap of the quarry
 “Were you there...”
 breaking through elderberry bushes
 we made our way to the swimming hole
 rocks skittered under our feet
 “...when they laid Him in the tomb?”
 She tripped over toads on her garden path
 so many at nightfall
 quiet hysteria of *too many living things* around me
 fear of numbers
 the skills you need to welcome multitudes

terrific strain of liking everybody
they do come back to life but they have different faces
choosing is lying
a Libran at the gate
where the arrow walks
he goes on listening
look past the face to see the hidden friend
look past the skin to see the music
weaning people off one another
some energy fields feed me some do not
to be as simple as xyz
to be at the end to begin
the old king shivered in his sleep.

2.

It makes us happy to think
elderberry wine they made I never tasted
drunkenness is hard work
it needs devotion
broken branch
apple core caught in the crook of a tree
makes us happy to think there's something beyond all this
that someone suffered worse than me and still came through
I sleep in a coffin I wake in the sea
circumstance delivered me into your hands
now you hold my felicity
domino effect of human smiles

I only buy insurance from very close friends
lifting flowers off the phone line
learn the language of forgetting
maskless interruption of our dream
the hurt in your hands from picking berries
all day in the sun and why
can't you tell I want to know myself out there
out there where pain comes in words and no one dies
the only reason to write is to discover
but what if it's that same old screen door
banging in the same old prairie wind
to let us see the things we know as if we knew them not
make it strange the only way to tell the truth
it's always raining in that alley
the point of religion was to be with me.

3.

Organ meats are loved by predators
something changes in human hearing
it lets the quiet parts of being roar
every man at the door Ulysses bewildered
hummingbird anonymity
I wanted to be known
I brought thee to my house there was nobody home.

To start again
the sweet as if

a barber pole or pony
on the sidewalk — such
were the days
as if all the air
inside money
were let out
in one great flatulent
roar and the world
was full of street fairs
just before dark.
The fluttering scriptures
drying on the monastery roof
in Paradjanov's film
is the truest image I have ever seen
a man make with his seeing.

Now then, as for eating
food in your hand
as you walk down the street
in summer, isn't
that an affectation?
Like music when
there's no one to dance with?
Or a parish church
with a big locked door?

3 September 2012

= = = = =

Everything comes as a surprise
the mirror on the buckthorn tree
analysis of air —
 this emerald
all around you —
 and not least
the tigers unseen among the trees
the streets unseen among the
exhausted pedestrians

c'est moi —
 you hear their growl
and we who are their supper praise
the rainbow intonations of their wings.

3 September 2012